



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

This week is National Tourism Week! This annual recognition of our industry serves as an important reminder of the incredible value and economic impact the travel and tourism industry has not only for the national economy but for Arizona's as well.

National Tourism Week helps us celebrate the people who visit here, the workforce that provides service for them and the economic growth and development created as a result. Please join us in recognizing this industry's remarkable contributions to Arizona communities!

Also, AOT will represent the Grand Canyon State at the U.S. Travel Association's International Pow Wow, May 15-19 in Orlando Florida. This event is the travel industry's premier international marketplace and the largest generator of Visit USA travel. We will certainly keep you posted on what we accomplish at the event.

Back at home the Arizona Highways Travel Show is coming up May 22 and 23! If you haven't already signed up to be part of this great event, be sure to review event information below. This show is a tremendous opportunity to showcase your tourist destination to the Phoenix market. Last year, more than 3,000 people attended this great event. More information is below in our ***Industry News*** section.

Have a great week!

AOT News

Arizona Office of Tourism Launches New Resource for Outdoor Activities

AOT has launched a new Web site tool to remind travelers of the abundance of travel experiences available throughout the Grand Canyon State. Whether you are a resident looking for a short-day trip to a local park or a first-time visitor wanting to experience the magnificence of the Grand Canyon National Park, outdoor opportunities are available in Arizona!

To bring attention with amazing outdoor adventures that can be found throughout the state, AOT has developed the new [Arizona Parks and Monuments](#) Web site resource listing all of the national parks and monuments, federal recreational areas, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sites, state parks, Tribal Lands, cultural and historical locations, and city parks. In fact, Arizona boasts more than 250 locations where visitors can experience the state's exhilarating outdoor activities. The webpage can be found on www.Arizonaguide.com under the Places to Visit tab and by clicking on [Arizona Parks and Monuments](#). For more information on what to see and do in Arizona visit www.Arizonaguide.com.

AOT is Re-launching Value AZ!

Post your summer [travel deals](#) online because AOT is gearing up to re-launch its successful summer, in-state campaign, Value AZ! AOT, in partnership with the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and statewide industry partners, will be launching our summer campaign later this month. The campaign will showcase the amazing summer travel opportunities found throughout Arizona in addition to promoting the economic value of travel to the state. If you want your travel deal promoted, this is your chance! Upload your travel deals and packages to the [Travel Deals](#) section of www.azot.gov. There is no charge to list a package on the Travel Deals section. If you have questions or need additional assistance, contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695 or via e-mail at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Calling all 2011 Events!

AOT is collecting all 2011 event dates for the Arizona Calendar of Events. Please identify the exact dates of your events, details can be sent at a later date if not yet confirmed. Submit your items by **Tuesday, June 1**. For more information, contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695 or via e-mail at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Registration is Now Open for the 30th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

The Governor's Conference on Tourism is Arizona's only all-industry educational and networking conference for members of the hospitality, travel and tourism industry. Take home practical ideas from the industry's top experts, hear the latest in hospitality and tourism, network with more than 500 fellow professionals, and learn about products and services from exhibiting sponsors. Registration and conference details are available online now. Questions? Call 602.265.2252 or email info@aztourismconference.com.

AOT Activities

AOT Leads Canadian Media

The Arizona Office of Tourism recently completed a media mission to Canada to promote new things happening in Arizona. Jennifer Sutcliffe, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager and

Kathy Motton, AOT's Canada media representative, spent several days speaking to various travel trade journalists and travel writers in the key markets of Toronto and Vancouver. They highlighted new travel product available and discussed new story ideas around the state. They met with more than 25 media representatives throughout the week. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via email at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[US Travel Associations International Pow Wow](#)

Date: May 15-19, 2010

Location: Orlando, FL

[Governor's Conference on Tourism](#)

Date: July 12-14, 2010

Location: Tucson, AZ

Industry News

Air Canada to Launch Montreal-Phoenix Winter Non-Stop Flights; Double Daily Toronto-Phoenix Flights Next Winter

Last week, Air Canada announced that it will introduce the only Montréal-Phoenix non-stop flights Saturdays and Sundays between November 6, 2010 and April 30, 2011 in time for planning vacations next winter. Flights are timed to offer travelers convenient connections to/from Ottawa, Québec City, Saint John, Fredericton, Halifax and Charlottetown. In addition, Air Canada is adding a daily winter seasonal flight between October 1, 2010 and April 30, 2011 to its existing year-round daily Toronto-Phoenix service. During the winter Air Canada also operates daily Calgary-Phoenix service.

Flights between Phoenix-Montréal and Phoenix-Toronto are timed to make convenient connections with other flights in Air Canada's extensive domestic and international network including London, Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Copenhagen and Geneva. For more information, visit www.aircanada.com.

Social Media: A Framework to Reach Mass Influencers

Social influencers cannot be ignored. They band together -- billions strong -- and can make or break a campaign, tarnish a brand, or catapult a product line to the top of the "I must have" consumer list. But reaching them means marketers must identify them first.

Forrester Analysts Josh Bernoff and Augie Ray developed a framework that allows marketers to identify and measure how people who frequent and share information on social media sites influence one another. The two call it "peer influence analysis." They explained the concept during the Forrester Marketing Forum 2010 conference in Los Angeles Friday.

Bernoff, who co-authored the book "Empowered," scheduled for release later this year, and Ray built a formula to assist marketers in building strategies that attract three levels of influencers: social broadcasters, mass influencers, and social influencers.

The framework for peer influence analysis came together after surveying 10,000 people about their online social participation. The numbers, which come from social networks -- Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn and others -- remain staggering. Through the survey, Bernoff and Ray managed to determine where and how frequently influence occurs.

From the peer analysis, Forrester estimates that within social networks, consumers created 256 billion influence impressions on one another about products and services in 2009. In social venues other than networks, such as blogs and product rating sites, consumers shared 1.64 billion influence posts.

Based on conservative estimates in which people view these posts, Ray and Bernoff believe the total number of consumer-generated impressions about products and services exceeded 500 billion in 2009.

Compare that with the approximate 2 trillion online ad impressions delivered during the same period last year, and it is evident that social applications now rival other mass media. "People make one-quarter as many impressions on each other as advertisers make," Bernoff says. "Plus, these impressions are more credible because they come from people who don't have a bias. They don't come from marketers trying to convince you to buy something."

Read the full article at Online Media Daily. (*Marketing & Tourism Trends*, May 2)

Study: Discounting Did Little to Offset Hotel Revenue Loss During Economic Downturn

Hotels worldwide faced a difficult decision regarding which hotel marketing tactics to apply when travel levels plummeted in 2009. They could try to drive room-nights by matching competitors' discounted rates, or they could hold rates steady and watch occupancy drop. A new hotel management study from the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research found that many hoteliers admitted engaging in price wars but they wished they had held firm on rates while using other tactics. The study, "Successful Tactics for Surviving an Economic Downturn: Results from an International Study," by Sheryl E. Kimes, is available at no charge at <http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/pubs/reports/2010.html>.

Kimes, the Singapore Tourism Board Distinguished Professor of Asian Hospitality Management at the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, surveyed 980 hotel managers worldwide early in 2010 to determine what tactics they used in response to the Great Recession, and how well those tactics worked. The tactics used were, in descending order: discounting, marketing initiatives, obscuring room rates, and cost cutting.

"Discounting was the most commonly applied tactic, although the managers often blamed their competitors for starting a price war. They rated marketing initiatives as the most effective set of tactics," said Kimes. "These hotel operators reported that in the next downturn, they'll focus more on marketing and less on price cuts. They also will be using rate-obscuring programs in 2010. Regardless of the tactics, the respondents urged all hotel operators to have a recession plan in place." (*Marketing & Tourism Trends*, May 2)

Google Expanding into Online Travel

Google, the world's most popular search engine, is expanding its reach in the lucrative online travel business. In March, Google added hotel links to its Maps application, listing hotels with room rates available to some users. Google also is reportedly in talks to pay \$1 billion to acquire ITA Software, which develops fare-shopping software for online travel agencies, airlines and fare-search sites, such as Bing Travel and Kayak. Analysts say Google is interested in providing information but not offering bookings. (*USA Today*; *Travel Advance*, May 5)

International Visitor Spending Rose in February

The Commerce Department said international visitors spent an estimated \$10.4 billion on travel to, and related tourism-related activities within, the United States during the month of February. This is nearly \$180 million more than was spent in February 2009 – marking the first increase in U.S. travel and tourism-related exports in more than 15 months. Purchase of travel and tourism-related goods and services by international visitors traveling in the United States totaled \$8.2 billion during February, an increase of nearly 4 percent from last year. (*Travel Advance*, May 6)

Grand Canyon's North Rim to Open May 15 for the 2010 Summer Season

The Arizona Department of Transportation will open Highway 67 to the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park on Saturday, May 15 by 7:00 a.m.; and Grand Canyon Lodge North Rim, a Forever Resorts property, and Grand Canyon Trail Rides will commence their 2010 seasonal operations.

Grand Canyon Lodge North Rim operations include lodging, groceries, camper services, food services and a service station. All concessioner facilities will open at 10:00 a.m. with the exception of the dining room which will open at 11:30 a.m. for lunch. Lodge check-in will begin at 4:00 p.m.

All services provided by the National Park Service, including the Visitor Center, backcountry permitting office, and campground, as well as the Grand Canyon Association bookstore will be available on May 15th at 8:00 a.m. The first scheduled ranger program, Grand Canyon Geology, will be on the back porch of the Grand Canyon Lodge at 3:00 p.m. The first evening program will be on May 15, at 8:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. All ranger programs will be listed in "The Guide" (North Rim: 2010 Season), a free publication distributed at the North Entrance Station, the North Rim Visitor Center, other contact stations in the park and online at www.nps.gov/grca once it is available.

The last day for most concessioner services and regularly scheduled ranger-led programs will be October 15, 2010. The National Park Service will continue its operations including the North Rim Visitor Center and Bookstore, as well as the Backcountry Permits Office through November 28, unless snow closes Highway 67 prior to that date. In addition, campsites with limited services such as portable toilets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and Forever Resorts will keep their gift shop and gas station open during this shoulder season.

The North Rim lies at the southern end of the Kaibab Plateau at approximately 8,500 feet in elevation, and offers spectacular canyon views. It is approximately a 215-mile drive from the

South Rim. Points of interest include Point Imperial, Cape Royal, Point Sublime, North Kaibab Trail, and Bright Angel Point.

SAVE the DATE: Arizona Highways Travel Show – May 22 & 23

The Arizona Highways Travel Show provides an opportunity for communities, along with industry-related organizations and companies to promote their tourism destinations directly to potential customers in the Phoenix market.

The Arizona Highways Travel Show had an extremely successful inaugural show last year and looks to build upon that success. More than 100 exhibitors participated in last year's event where more than 3,000 attendees were looking for travel locations and things to do in the summer and fall in Arizona.

Show Details:

Arizona Highways Travel Show
Phoenix Convention Center – Hall F
May 22 & 23, 2010
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

To register for a booth at the show:

www.arizonahighwaytravelshow.com

Booth prices start at: \$650.00 – *opportunities to share a booth are available*

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Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!

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